

Monaghan EU
Presidency Programme

Celebrating Connections

Monaghan, Finland
and Europe

July - December 2026



Ceannairde Contae
Mhúineacháin
Monaghan
County Council

CULTÚR2026
Sharing Ireland's Culture



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
Communications and Sport



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Monaghan EU Presidency Programme

From 1 July to 31 December 2026, Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), a significant leadership role at the centre of EU decision-making. During this six-month period, Ireland will chair Council meetings, facilitate negotiations, build consensus among Member States, and help advance EU legislation and policies that impact the daily lives of more than 450 million citizens across Europe.

As part of Ireland's EU Presidency programme, each county in the Republic of Ireland has been paired with an EU Member State, creating opportunities to develop meaningful local connections, strengthen community engagement, and foster lasting partnerships throughout Europe.

Monaghan has been paired with Finland for the duration of the Presidency. In preparation for this partnership, representatives from Monaghan County Council and the Embassy of Finland in Ireland have been working together to develop a programme of activities that will showcase Monaghan, promote Ireland's Presidency, and strengthen cultural, educational, community, and business links between the two partners.

The programme will incorporate a diverse range of public events, exhibitions, discussions, and cultural exchanges designed to celebrate shared values, encourage collaboration, and deepen understanding between the people of Monaghan and Finland.

Both partners look forward to establishing a successful and enduring relationship that will create lasting benefits for their communities and contribute to stronger connections between Ireland and Finland long after the conclusion of Ireland's EU Presidency.



MONAGHAN × MOOMIN®



July to December

Step into the magical world of the Moomins and celebrate one of Finland's most beloved cultural treasures. Created by Finnish author and artist Tove Jansson, the Moomin stories have captivated generations with their gentle humour, imaginative adventures and timeless messages of kindness, curiosity, inclusion and respect for nature.

The values at the heart of the Moomin stories closely reflect the ethos of public libraries. Like Moominvalley itself, libraries are welcoming spaces where everyone belongs, where diversity is celebrated, where learning and creativity flourish, and where stories help us better understand ourselves and each other.

Join us for a wonderful programme of Moomin-inspired events, including storytelling sessions, puppet shows, music workshops, film screenings and hands-on book-themed activities for children and families. Through stories, play and creativity, we'll explore the enchanting world of the Moomins while celebrating the special cultural connection between Ireland and Finland. Whether you're a lifelong Moomin fan or discovering them for the first time, there's something for everyone in this family-friendly celebration of imagination, community and the joy of reading.

Programme:

- **Exhibitions** in 4 library locations (Clones, Monaghan Peace Campus, Castleblayney & Carrickmacross).
- A **county wide character trail** set in areas of nature with accompanying map/record card.
- A story trail/quotes trail in Barry McGuigan park, Clones.
- A **programme of creative workshops** across 5 library locations.
- A **screening** of 'Tove' at Clones Film Festival.
- A **series of music workshops** themed around snufkin's song for a friend.
- A **series of Family story reading sessions** in each library location.
- **Activities linked** with National Play Day in July, Children's Book Festival in October, Climate Action Week in October and Cavan Monaghan Science Festival in November



Muckno Mania does Fiesta not Siesta! Castleblayney is turning up the heat! Join us from July 10th–12th 2026, for a vibrant weekend of music, color and high-energy fun. From children's workshops and street festivals to Spanish music, dancing and food at Lough Muckno, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Castleblayney Community Enterprise in conjunction with the Muckno Mania Festival are happy to wish to recognise Ireland's EU Presidency, where they have invited 17 guests from the town of Caudete in the Province of Albacete in Spain to attend the Muckno Mania Festival

The Spanish visitors include Dancers, Musicians and members of Caudete Council. During the weekend they will perform traditional Spanish dance and music which will part of the Festival Programme on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th July.

Their visit will culminate in a special Spanish Cultural Cabaret event on Saturday night 11th July, on the grounds of Lough Muckno and will include performances from local adults and children who have in the run up to the festival participated in Flamenco Dance workshops. In addition, the Spanish Embassy has supported this event by co-funding the appearance and performance of a professional Spanish harpist, composer and singer Pilar Paradela who is based in Dublin.

Forget the nap it's time to celebrate!



Scenic Sessions 2026

July – October

Scenic Sessions 2026 is a collaborative initiative between Monaghan Tourism and Creative Monaghan that showcases County Monaghan as a distinctive visitor destination through a series of pop-up live music performances in unique outdoor locations across the county. Building on the success of last year, the programme will feature a diverse mix of established and emerging artists, including Jamie Duffy, Caitríona Sherlock, Gráinne Duffy, The World Choir, Music Generation, Ciarán Rosney, Nedyá Ivanova and Niamh Farrell, performing in locations such as Concra Wood, Sliabh Beagh, Clones Marina, Tin Church Laragh, Dartrey Forest, Patrick Kavanagh Centre and Market Square Carrickmacross.

Through high-quality filmed performances set against Monaghan's scenic landscapes, the project generates engaging digital content that highlights the county's natural scenery, cultural heritage and creative talent. Scenic Sessions strengthens Monaghan's profile as a vibrant cultural and tourism destination, transforming a range of scenic and community settings into distinctive performance spaces. The initiative supports local and national artists while delivering a suite of lasting promotional assets that present Monaghan to domestic and international audiences in a compelling and contemporary way.



Read Your Way Around Europe with Monaghan County Libraries

July – December

To celebrate Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, join us on a literary journey across Europe with our 27 Countries, 27 Stories Reading Challenge.

From the Nordic landscapes of Finland to the Mediterranean shores of Cyprus, discover the rich cultures, histories and perspectives of all 27 EU Member States through fiction. Readers are invited to explore a novel, short story collection or work of fiction from each country, travelling across borders without leaving their favourite reading chair.

This unique reading promotion highlights the power of literature to connect people, foster understanding and celebrate the diversity that lies at the heart of the European Union. Through stories, we can experience different languages, traditions and ways of life while discovering the shared values that unite us.

Public libraries have long championed access to knowledge, cultural exchange and lifelong learning. This challenge offers readers the opportunity to broaden their horizons, find new favourite authors and embark on an unforgettable European adventure—one book at a time.

Whether you return to the pages of a beloved European voice or wander into stories yet unknown, may it open like a well-worn map—each book a doorway, each page a path—drawing you across borders, into new worlds, and into the shared rhythm of stories that connect us all.



CULTURE NIGHT

Friday 18th September

Culture Night is an annual all-island public event that celebrates culture, creativity and the arts. For 2026, the programme will include artists and creatives from EU member states delivering activities across the county.

As part of our cultural pairing with Finland, we are delighted to welcome a number of Finnish artists to Monaghan, as follows:



Riikka Palonen, Visual Artist & Storyteller

Riikka Palonen is a well-known and multitalented artist. In addition to visual art, she has a natural flare for the performing arts, and her skills as a writer are undeniable. As a child she discovered that storybooks could transport her to other worlds of fairytale, myth and magic. To this day she still enjoys visiting those faraway places, and as a storyteller can take others on that journey.

For over 15 years Riikka has been performing as a storyteller in Finland and in recent years in venues across the UK from Oxford to Orkney, and internationally from Morocco to

Kalle Peura, Concert & Collaborative Pianist

Peura's talent as a soloist has been widely recognized. He debuted with the Irish National Symphony Orchestra in 2023, performing Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini at the National Concert Hall in Dublin. In 2024, he took the stage at Ireland's National Opera House to perform Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with the Wexford Sinfonia, followed by Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand with the UCD Orchestra.



Teemu Auersalo

Teemu Auersalo is a Finland-born animator and screenwriter based in Dublin. He is best known for directing the animated fantasy short Trolley Boy (2009) and co-authoring the middle-grade book and animated film Fleak (2025) with Antti Haikala. An enthusiastic bouzouki player, Teemu is currently attending the Ballyfermot College learning Irish Traditional music and instrument making.

SEPT 18-20 2026



DRUMLIN STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

We are delighted to welcome you to the third Drumlin Storytelling Festival, taking place in iconic locations throughout County Monaghan.

This year, we warmly welcome our guest storytellers Seosamh Ó Maolalaí, Kate Corkery, and, joining us from Finland, Riikka Palonen.

Our eclectic programme of free events offers something for everyone, creating opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience the wonder of the oral storytelling tradition. From Stories in Fairyland in Cornagilta School to Meeting at the Crossroads at Greenans Cross School, and Bíonn Siúlach Scéalach (The traveller has tales to tell) at An Nead, the festival celebrates storytelling in all its forms.

The programme also includes family storytimes in local libraries, special storytelling sessions in care home settings, storytelling walking tours, and lively story swaps in Monaghan town.

The highlight event, **From Start to Finnish – Tales Under the Eaves**, will feature our special guest storytellers and musicians in the beautiful surroundings of Bessmount House.

The festival concludes on Sunday 20th with A Walk in the Woods in Rossmore Park at 10:30am, followed by Lighting the Imagination, an afternoon session at Mullan Mills at 2:30pm.





From Forests to Drumlins A Finnish Monaghan Cultural Weekend

18th – 21st September

This special weekend event brings together the rich cultural traditions of Finland and Monaghan in a vibrant programme of music, art, literature and shared experiences. Audiences of all ages are invited to explore Finnish creativity, engage with visiting artists, and celebrate the connections between Nordic and Irish culture in a welcoming and inspiring setting.

**This four-day cultural exchange will celebrate the links
between Finland and Monaghan through:**

Culture & creativity

Democratic participation & civic life

Innovation, enterprise & rural resilience

Expected outcomes and legacy:

Strengthened international cultural links

Knowledge exchange on democracy & participation

New ideas for rural enterprise and innovation

Potential for future EU collaboration projects

‘My Voice’ Workshops to young People

Our visiting Ambassadors will participate in a ‘My Voice’ workshop delivered by Monaghan County Libraries staff with senior secondary students.

Developed through an EU-funded project (CERV programme), the participatory workshop was created in partnership with organisations in Finland, Ireland, Italy and Slovenia, with the Finnish team leading the project. Students will learn more about democracy and how society works. The workshop is designed to help young people express their views and engage with issues that matter to them, supporting active participation and civic engagement.

Enterprise visits

The Ambassadors will visit a number of local enterprises, which will showcase the strong Finland-Ireland enterprise linkages and demonstrating how Monaghan-based companies are contributing directly to European and global energy and digital solutions.



Civic Reception – Celebrating Friendship, Culture and Innovation: Ireland and Finland

Ireland and Finland share many common values, including a commitment to democracy, education, innovation, sustainability and international cooperation. Through diplomatic, cultural, educational and economic links, both nations continue to build strong partnerships that benefit communities and citizens alike.

Monaghan County Council values international engagement and cultural exchange as important elements of community and civic development. This civic reception provides an opportunity to recognise these connections, celebrate international friendship and acknowledge the contribution of both ambassadors in fostering mutual understanding and collaboration between Ireland and Finland.

Following the reception, guests will have the opportunity to explore the wide range of Culture Night activities taking place across the Peace Campus, experiencing an evening programme that celebrates creativity, culture, heritage, and community engagement in County Monaghan.





Building Sustainable Peace in a Digitally Transformed World

Peace Seminar at Peace Campus, Monaghan Town

In Partnership with the Embassy of Finland, John and Pat Hume Foundation and Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

To mark International Day of Peace, the Peace Campus will host a special seminar bringing together policymakers, diplomats, educators, cultural leaders, community organisations and young people to explore the role of peacebuilding in a changing world.

As conflict, misinformation, technological disruption and political polarisation reshape societies worldwide, new approaches to peacebuilding are required. The seminar will reflect on the Northern Ireland process and learnings, examine the role of the European Union and its member states, including Finland's internationally recognised contributions to mediation, education and conflict resolution, in promoting sustainable peace.

The seminar will include a panel discussion of the role of Women in peacebuilding, politics and barriers to women's participation in politics and public life. Women continue to be underrepresented in peace negotiations and political decision-making despite evidence that their participation contributes to more sustainable peace agreements.

The seminar will conclude with the launch of the new **Common Threads – Connecting Communities Through Culture** project, funded by SEUPB Peace PLUS programme and coordinated by Monaghan County Council Cultural Section (Library/Museum).

Objectives

- Celebrate the International Day of Peace.
- Highlight Finland's contribution to peace, mediation and democratic governance.
- Explore the impact of Artificial Intelligence on peace and democracy.
- Promote women's leadership in peacebuilding and political life.
- Foster dialogue between policymakers, communities, educators and young people.
- Strengthen European cooperation and community resilience.

KAVANAGH WEEKEND

KAVANAGH AND THE BEATS (Kavanagh Weekend 2026)

25th – 27th September

Kavanagh Weekend Festival is a contemporary arts and literature festival that celebrates Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh and the idiomatic culture from which he emerged.

Kavanagh Weekend 2026 will explore Patrick Kavanagh's connection to the Beat Generation, coinciding with global celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of poet Allen Ginsberg. Through poetry, performance, music, conversation and community participation, the 2026 programme will place Kavanagh's work in dialogue with one of the most influential literary and cultural movements of the 20th century.

Highlights will include the annual Procession of Light with Armagh Rhymers, Keynote from renowned poet Anne Waldman, a book fair, poetry masterclasses, the annual poetry award as well as multiple celebrations of Kavanagh and the Beats. The lineup will include a host of national and international artists including French based Masters of Jajouka, French actor Jean March Barr and Irish comedian and broadcaster Tommy Tiernan.

Clones Film Festival 2026

22nd – 25th October

The festival currently screens a wide range of European cinema each year, offering audiences refreshing and memorable cinema experiences, and broadening horizons. Titles are selected from key European film festivals as well as shared with us directly by filmmakers.

For the EU Presidency, the committee will enhance and increase access to European cinema in our rural border region by developing a comprehensive programme of screenings, educational events, and cultural activities. This enhanced programme will include inviting a European director with retrospective screenings and discussions, showcase EU cinema for school students (exchange students, MFL learners and those with an interest in Film Studies), and a short film programme featuring films from as many EU member states as possible, with some directors in attendance.





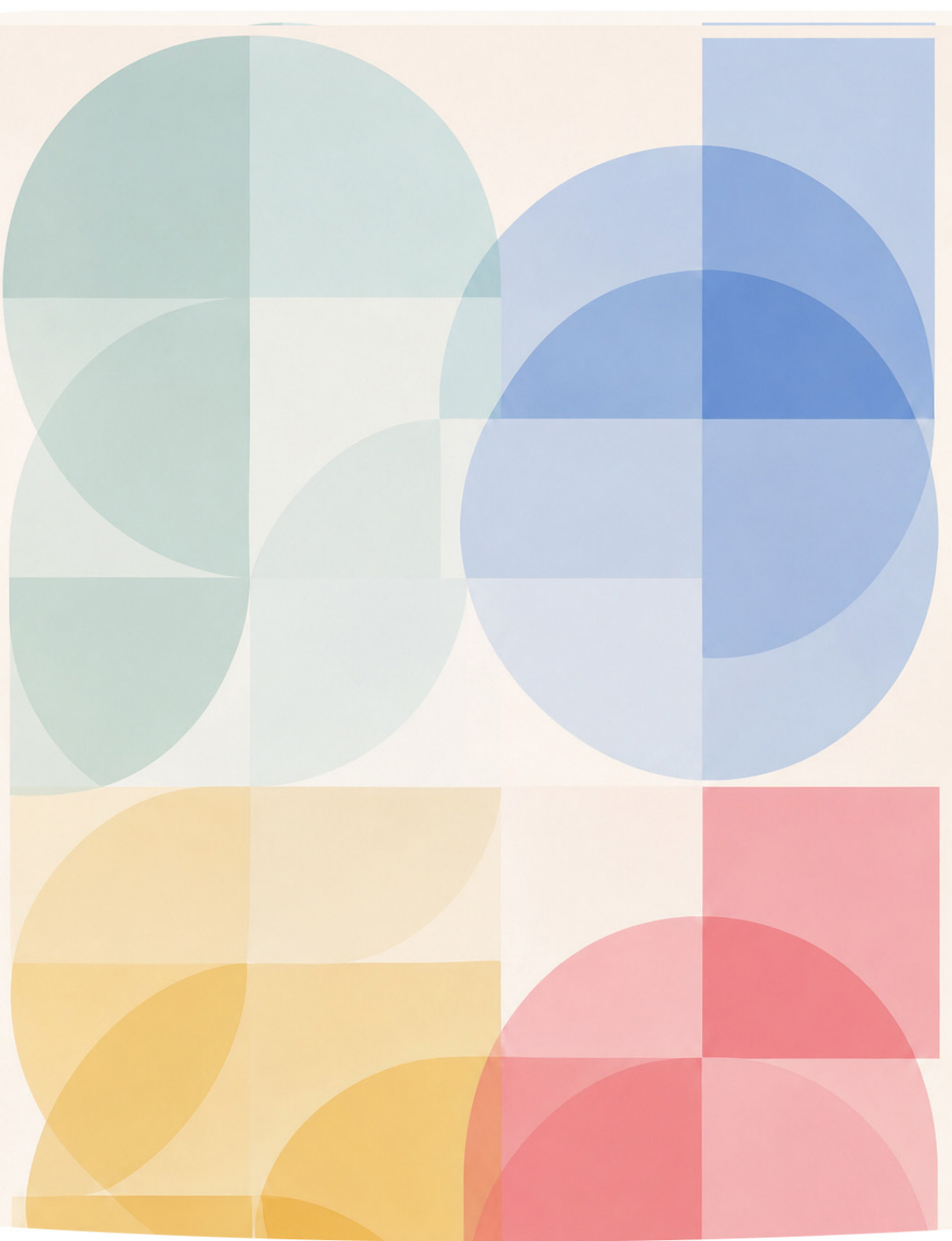
November 5th to 8th, 2026

Tradoodle festival for Children is Ireland's only traditional arts festival dedicated to children and families. Tradoodle presents a jam-packed programme for children featuring traditional musicians, singers, storytellers and dancers working alongside artists and creatives from the fields of visual arts, theatre and puppetry.

Tradoodle is presented by Ceol Connected, a prominent producer of traditional arts programming for young people and has a long-established relationship with Finland, partnering on several projects and festivals.



For 2026, we welcome Petra Käppi and Olli Sippola, Finnish musicians and music educators from Culture Cooperative Uulu that promotes Finnish folk music and different music cultures of the world. They are renowned for their engaging, interactive children's concerts. Through storytelling, singing, and the use of traditional instruments, they create immersive musical experiences that encourage participation, creativity, and an appreciation of nature and cultural heritage among young audiences.



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